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ABSTRACT

A sample from a teacher-developed instructional television program is used to illustrate some possibilities for the exploitation of videotaped instructional materials in second language teaching. Aspects of the planning of tape production are outlined, and a transcript of the segment is provided. Features of the discourse from linguistic and paralinguistic perspectives are analyzed, and activities are also included. The tape was designed for use in an intensive course in high-intermediate to advanced level English as a second language for adults, and emphasized aspects of oral communication with native English speakers. Copies of some frames from the videotape are appended. (MSE)

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# TEACHER-MADE VIDEOTAPE MATERIALS FOR THE SECOND-LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

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I am indebted to the "actors" in this production, Jean Svacina and Brad Reed, for their time, help, and suggestions; to Netta Gillespie, the Language Learning Laboratory studio director, for her time, interest, expertise, and encouragement in this and many other productions; and to Sandra Savignon and Margie Berns for their encouragement, support, and editorial insights.



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## INTRODUCTION

As more communicative approaches to second-language teaching are explored, the use of videotape (VT) instructional materials is becoming a subject of great interest. Unlike written dialogs, and even audio recordings, videotape is capable of capturing a communicative act in its entirety. This medium thus provides an excellent means for the presentation, analysis and discussion of authentic oral discourse. Not surprisingly, therefore, VT programs for second-language (L2) instruction have begun to proliferate. These materials, both commercial and in-house productions, have appeared in a variety of formats: videotaped lecture series, off-air recordings (taped TV broadcasts), and dramatic and informational series, to mention only a few; and their very presence has served to heighten teacher awareness of VT as an instructional medium. An additional, not to be overlooked factor in the current interest of VT instructional materials is of course the increasing accessibility of the facilities, equipment and technology needed for their production and/or use. Today, for the first time, a great number of L2 classroom teachers have available to them a technology heretofore limited to only a very few experimental programs.

Though VT has provoked much interest and is widely recognized as a viable and effective medium for L2 instruction, its actual use in L2 classrooms remains rather limited. There seem to be three significant causes for this limited use: (1) many L2 classroom teachers are still uncomfortable with VT technology and equipment, (2) there is a lack of understanding about the possibilities for the exploitation of VT materials, and (3) there exist no standard, widely-recognized procedures for the use of VT materials in the L2 classroom.

The first of these problems is perhaps the easiest to solve. It seems likely that time and increased familiarity with video technology will play a large part in lessening apprehensions that L2 teachers may have about using VT materials. However, time and familiarity cannot be counted on to solve the second and third problems. Only a systematic exploration and demonstration of the potential of VT materials and the teaching/learning activities to accompany them can ensure the successful integration of this new technology into L2 programs.

To illustrate some of the many possibilities for the exploitation of VT materials and to suggest viable classroom procedures for their use, a sample from an existing teacher-made instructional VT program will be exmained below in some detail. Following a discussion of the considerations that preceded the production of this particular segment, a transcript of the segment will be provided along with an analysis of selected features of the discourse from both linguistic and paralinguistic perspectives. In conclusion, suggestions will be offered for classroom presentation and related followup activities.

## PRODUCTION OF A VIDEOTAPE: SOME PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

The sample that will be examined and discussed is a VT segment that is very similar to segments from a VT program developed by the author for use in the Intensive English Institute (IEI) of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC). The primary audience for these materials were English as a Second Language (ESL) students with high-intermediate to advanced levels of proficiency in English. These particular students comprised a rather heterogeneous

group. Their was substantial diversity with regard to their age, prior education, linguistic and cultural background, interests, goals, and motivation.

What these students had in common (as do most other L2 students in similar situations) was a need to be able to participate effectively in face-to-face communication with native speakers of English. To help them to do so, it was felt that what was needed were materials that would familiarize these students with as many aspects of interpersonal oral communication in English as possible.

VT appeared to be a logical choice as an instructional medium for achieving this objective of familiarization. It was chosen primarily because it would expose the students to both the linguistic and paralinguistic features of interpersonal oral communication, and thus provide them with a more complete view and understanding of the communicative act involved. Since, at that time, no commercial materials could be found that could adequately meet this objective, it was decided that the materials should be produced in-house. Fortunately, the necessary facilities, equipment, and technical assistance were available at the Language Learning Laboratory (LLL) of the UIUC.

The next concern was the definition of an approach to guide the development of the materials. The approach chosen contained elements of functional-language teaching and discourse analysis. It was decided that particular language functions, e.g., apologizing, inviting (chosen according to their relevance to the students' needs) would define the parameters of the Vt segments, and that the primary focus of the lessons based on these segments would be the analysis of the discourse features contained therein.

Another consideration was the nature of the content of the segments. Of fundamental concern here was that the communication presented be as authentic as possible. Therefore, it was determined that the most appropriate format for generating the content of the segment would be a planned, but unscripted role play. This type of role play is planned in the sense that the participants are told what language function to execute and what attitude to adopt. For the particular segment that will be dealt with later in this discussion, one participant was told to invite the other to an event. The other participant was instructed to accept the invitation. Both were to act as though they were peers and casual friends. The role plays are unscripted in the sense that the participants supplied their own language and social context extemporaneously to execute the function.

Having considered the audience, objective, medium, approach, format, and content, it was necessary to specify a set and participants for the segment. The controlling criterion in choosing the set was simplicity since it was felt that distractions should be minimized in order to focus attention on the communication taking place. It was decided that the set should include no scenery or props, and that the only visuals on the set should be the two participants, occupying center stage, and a blue curtain, used as a backdrop.

The main consideration regarding the appearance of the participants was that it not unduly distract the viewer's attention from the communicative act. One of the participants (Jean) is female, in her mid-twenties, approximately 5'5", with shoulder-length, wavy, light-brown hair. She wears a brown corduroy jacket over a print blouse and denim skirt. The other participant (Brad) is male, in

his mid-twenties, approximately 6'1", with neatly-cut, straight, dark-brown hair and a full, dark-brown beard. He wears a dark-green, crew-neck, pullover sweater and blue jeans.

The entrances and exits of the participants were likewise planned with simplicity in mind. Jean enters and exits stage right; Brad enters and exits stage left.

The final step in the production process was the actual videotaping. The videotaping was done in a small TV studio which is part of LLL of the UIUC, and required only one camera and two technicians (the author and the studio director). The production process[2] for the segment took approximately ten minutes.[3]

Having provided a brief overview of the conceptual and physical aspects of the development of the segment, we now return to the two points that are central to this discussion: the exploitation of VT materials and classroom procedures for their use. These points will be dealt with through (1) the enumeration of possible teaching points/foci that can be drawn from a brief VT segment and (2) the suggestion of procedures for the presentation of these points/foci in the L2 classroom. The discussion of these points will be related to the aforementioned VT segment illustrating the language function "inviting" in an informal context, and will include:

1. a verbatim transcript of the segment;

2. analyses of some of the paralinguistic, functional, sociocultural, affective, grammatical, lexical, and phonological features of the discourse contained in the segment; and

3. considerations and suggestions for the classroom presentation of the data from the aforementioned analyses.

## TRANSCRIPT OF THE VIDEOTAPED SEGMENT

The following is a verbatim transcript of the videotaped segment. Note the numbers in parentheses and the letters preceding the lines of the dialog. In the

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[2]The "studio production process" refers to the actual videotaping of two takes and the pre and post consultation between the author and the participants. It does not include set-up time, that is, lighting and sound checks, camera warm-up and adjustment, etc.

[3]One of the reasons for including this section on the production process was to demonstrate that making a tape of this type is (1) not an extremely complicated and burdensome task, and (2) not beyond the capabilities of classroom teachers who are willing to take the little time necessary to familarize themselves with the necessary equipment. Furthermore, I believe this type of tape (which is not of the slickest professional quality) to be as, if not more, effective than slickly-produced commercial tapes, which are often quite expensive and are not necessarily well-suited in terms of content and/or focus for use in a given classroom situation.

following analyses of this segment, any number in parentheses will refer back to that particular line in the transcript. In addition, the letters J and B will be used to refer to the speaker of a given line (B = Brad; J = Jean).

(1) J: Hi, Brad.
(2) B: Hi, Jean. How are you?
(3) J: Oh, I'm pretty good. How about you?
(4) B: Not bad. Busy.
(5) J: Busy. I'm sure. Brad, I'm glad I caught you. We're having a Halloween party at our house next Saturday night. Can you come?
(6) B: A Halloween party?
(7) J: A Halloween party--that means costumes.
(8) B: Oh, a costume. Boy.
(9) J: You have to wear a costume.
(10) B: Sure. That's next Saturday night?
(11) J: That's next Saturday, October 30th.
(12) B: Yeah. That sounds fun.
(13) J: Okay...
(14) B: That sounds fun.
(15) J: Great. I'm glad you can come.
(16) B: Do I need to bring anything?
(17) J: No, I don't think so...umm...we're going to have beer and wine and some pop...
(18) B: Umm-hmm.
(19) J: ...so if you want anything else, you'll have to bring that...
(20) B: Any charge?
(21) J: No, absolutely not.
(22) B: Okay.
(23) J: Yeah.
(24) B: That...now, it's at your house?
(25) J: It's at my house. Do you know where I live?
(26) B: I'm not sure. You better tell me.
(27) J: Okay, I live at 905 South Race.
(28) B: 905 South Race.
(29) J: Yeah. It's near you.
(30) B: That's close...
(31) J: Right.
(32) B: ...I'm at 602. Right.
(33) J: That's right.
(34) B: Okay. That's on Saturday, the 30th?
(35) J: At...at about 7:30 or 8:00.
(36) B: At about 7:30.
(37) J: Uh-huh.
(38) B: Okay, Jean...
(39) J: Okay. Good.
(40) B: ...thanks a lot.
(41) J: Umm-hmm. I'll see you then. Bye-bye.
(42) B: Okay. Bye-bye.

## ANALYSES OF VIDEOTAPED SEGMENT

The purpose of the following analyses is to illustrate the variety of features that are relevant to an understanding of the preceding dialog. It is not suggested that analyses of this breadth and/or depth need be done by teachers or students when using VT materials of this type.

1. *Paralinguistic Features*

The paralinguistic features of this dialog have been broken down into four categories: kinesics (gestures), eye contact, proxemics (distance between participants), and kinesthetics (touching).

a. *Kinesics*

In the following analysis the gestures of the participants are indexed to the lines of the dialog during which they occur. The remarks in parentheses refer to the probable meaning or significance of the gestures; (?) indicates that the meaning of a particular gesture was not readily apparent).

(2) B - brings both arms up from sides--palms of hands face up (greeting; welcome)
(4) B - returns hands to hips
(8) B - cocks head back (thinking)
(16) B - brings both arms up from sides--palms of hands face up (questioning); returns hands to hips
(17) J - moves head side to side (negation)
(20) B - brings right arm up from side--right palm face up (questioning); returns hand to hip
(21) J - moves head side to side (negation)
(24) B - brings right arm up from side--right palm face up; holds position (questioning)
(26) B - moves right hand side to side (?); returns hand to hip
(28) B - brings left arm up--left palm face up; strikes left palm with index figure of right hand (?); holds position
(30) B - lifts right index finger from left palm; points finger at J (agreeing)
(32) B - places index finger of right hand in left palm (?); holds position
(34) B - lifts right hand; strikes left palm with back of right hand (?); holds position
(42) B - lifts right hand from left palm; waves with right hand (leave-taking)

Throughout the dialog both B and J use nods of the head and facial expressions to emphasize and react to points. J gestures only with her head in this dialog. Throughout the sequence, her right hand (her left hand is not visible) remains in her right jacket pocket.

b. *Eye Contact*

Eye contact between B and J is faily constant throughout the dialog. However, there are significant breaks. These breaks are indicated below and are indexed to the transcript. The comments on the right suggest reasons for these breaks.

(8) B - to consider situation
(11) B - to listen for details
(11) J - to recollect
(17) J - to recollect
(28) B - to take mental notes
(34) B - to take mental notes
(36) J - to recollect

c. *Proxemics*

A distance of approximately three feet is maintained between J and B throughout the dialog.

d. *Kinesthetics*

J and B do not touch each other at any time during this sequence.

2. *Functional Features*

The following is a line-by-line description of the functions of the utterances of the participants, that is, what the speakers are *doing* with language.

(1) J - greets
(2) B - greets; asks perfunctory question
(3) J - provides perfunctory answer; asks perfunctory question
(4) B - provides perfunctory answer; provides additional information
(5) J - acknowledges answer; changes subject; provides background for invitation; invites
(6) B - considers invitation
(7) J - provides additional information; indicates condition
(8) B - comments on condition
(9) J - repeats condition
(10) B - accepts invitation and condition; requests information/clarification
(11) J - provides information/clarification
(12) B - comments on situation
(13) J - acknowledges comment
(14) B - comments on situation (continuation of (12))
(15) J - acknowledges acceptance of invitation
(16) B - requests information
(17) J - provides information requested; adds additional information
(18) B - shows understanding
(19) J - provides additional information; poses hypothetical question
(20) B - requests information
(21) J - provides information
(22) B - accepts information; shows understanding
(23) J - acknowledges acceptance/understanding
(24) B - requests information/verification
(25) J - provides information/verification; offers additional information
(26) B - accepts offer
(27) J - provides information
(28) B - repeats information (takes mental notes)
(29) J - provides additional related information
(30) B - acknowledges and agrees with information
(31) J - acknowledges agreement

(32) B - provides additional information (continuation of (30))
(33) J - acknowledges agreement
(34) B - requests verification of information
(35) J - verifies information; provides additional information
(36) B - repeats additional information (takes mental notes)
(37) J - acknowledges understanding
(38) B - signals end of conversation
(39) J - acknowledges signal
(40) B - shows gratitude
(41) J - accepts show of gratitude; takes leave
(42) B - acknowledges leave-taking; takes leave

3. *Sociocultural Features*

The following is a list of topics drawn from the dialog whose societal and cultural implications are relevant to the understanding of the interaction. These topics are not indexed to the lines of the dialog.

(1) Relative status of the participants
(2) Level of Formality: register
(3) Relationship between the participants
(4) Formulaic questions and responses
(5) Halloween: meaning and tradition
(6) Costumes: significance/purpose
(7) Parties: conventions, procedures, elements
(8) Saturday night: significance
(9) The invitation of a man by a woman
(10) An offer by a guest to bring something
(11) A question from a guest about a charge
(12) Permission given by a host for a guest to bring something
(13) Refusal by a host of payment offered by a guest
(14) Distance maintained between participants
(15) Absence of touching by either participant

4. *Affective Features*

The following is a list of topics that address the affective implications of the interaction. These topics are not indexed to lines from the dialog.

(1) Tone of the interaction: degree of seriousness, friendliness, informality
(2) Directness/Indirectness, e.g., the lead-in to the invitation
(3) Sincerity of the invitation, acceptance of the invitation, expression of gratitude for the invitation
(4) Offers of help by the guest: real or perfunctory, acceptable or insulting
(5) The host's reactions to the guest's offers

5. *Grammatical Features*

The following is a list of grammatical features and constructions that appear in the dialog. These features and constructions are indexed to the lines of the dialog in which they appear.

(1) Contractions - (3, 5, 10, 11, 15, 17, 19, 24, 25, 26, 29, 30, 32, 33, 34, 41)
(2) Prepositions: of time - (34, 35, 36); of place - (5, 24, 25, 27, 32)

(3) Modals/Quasi-modals - (5, 9, 15, 16, 19, 26, 41)
(4) Appositives - (11, 34)
(5) Formulaic wh- questions - (2, 3)
(6) That-clause adjective complements - (5, 15)
(7) Interrogative noun clause - (25)
(8) Present Progressive tense with future time reference - (5)
(9) "Going to" future - (17)
(10) "If...then" conditional construction - (19)

6. *Lexical Features*

The following is a list of vocabulary items and idiomatic expressions that appear in the dialog. These items and expressions are indexed to the lines of the dialog in which they appear.

(1) pretty good - (3)
(2) not bad - (4)
(3) caught - (5)
(4) Halloween - (5, 6, 7)
(5) costume - (7, 8, 9)
(6) Boy - (8)
(7) sounds fun - (12, 14)
(8) pop - (17)
(9) charge - (20)
(10) absolutely not - (21)
(11) Uh-huh - (37)
(12) thanks a lot - (40)
(13) I'll see you then - (41)
(14) Bye-bye - (41, 42)

The following terms appear repeatedly throughout the dialog. Each occurrence of one of these terms should be dealt with individually because of the major role that context plays in the determination of its meaning and function.

(1) Okay - (13, 22, 27, 34, 38, 39, 42)
(2) Sure - (5, 10, 26)
(3) Yeah - (12, 23, 29)
(4) Right - (31, 32, 33)
(5) Oh - (3, 8)
(6) Umm-hmm - (18, 41)
(7) Great - (15)
(8) Good - (39)

7. *Phonological Features*

The following is a list of occurrences of fast speech phenomena that appear in the dialog. These phenomena are indexed to the lines of the dialog in which they occur.

(1) How about - (3) = /hawbawt/
(2) about you - (3) = /bawčuw/
(3) caught you - (5) = /kočuw/
(4) having - (5) = /haevin/
(5) have to - (9) = /haefta/
(6) glad you - (15) = /glaeǰuw/

Other phonological features for consideration could be the normal and contrastive word and sentence stress and intonation patterns of the utterances of the dialog.

In the foregoing analyses a piece of discourse has been examined from a variety of perspectives. Through this examination, different types of data that are relevant to a fairly complete understanding of the discourse have been isolated.[4]

However, the isolation of discrete bits of information is not the goal of this paper. This isolation was done in order to manifest the amount and variety of knowledge necessary to understand even this rather simple piece of discourse, and to emphasize the rather complicated interrelation of its elements. In addition to providing insights into a particular piece of discourse, the analyses are important in that they provide data which can be dealt with in context. However, the provision of data is only half the task of this discussion. The question of how to present this data in the classroom remains.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASSROOM PRESENTATION

The logical starting point in the presentation of this type of VT material is the in-class analysis of the videotaped segment. This mode of presentation seems to lend itself very well to a teaching strategy that could be labelled as "guided induction." This strategy requires the teacher to ask questions that will lead students to an understanding of particular features of the discourse and, consequently, to a fairly complete understanding of the discourse as a whole. This strategy is effective for three reasons: (1) It allows the teacher to pinpoint aspects of the discourse that cause problems for the student as well as those that do not (the teacher can thus concentrate more attention on the former than on the latter); (2) It allows for an optimum level of student participation in the analytic process; and (3) this participation, more often than not, serves to increase student curiosity and motivation. However, this strategy, as all strategies, has limitations on its applicability; therefore, the teacher should not hesitate to provide clarification or explanation when the need arises.

When the teacher is satisfied with the level of understanding of the segment that the students have attained, it is advisable to allow the students to apply what they have learned through the use of followup activities.

## FOLLOWUP ACTIVITIES

The in-class analysis of a functionally-based VT segment can easily lead to numerous and varied types of followup exercises. The following is a listing of some of the possibilities.

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[4]There are, of course, more classes of features that could be analyzed than are presented here. And, certainly, there are more features that could be included in the classes than are analyzed here. However, the analyses done in this paper are meant to point out features that might be useful in the classroom, not to discover and categorize all of the possible features.

1. *Analysis of Alternative Dialogs*

The in-class analysis mentioned above was done on a dialog in which an invitation was offered and accepted. To broaden the students' functional range, the teacher might present an alternative dialog(s) for analysis which deals with the same function (in this case, inviting), but whose outcome is different, for example, non-acceptance of the invitation, or whose participants are different, for example, two men, rather than a man and a woman. These dialogs could then be analyzed in much the same way as the initial dialog.

2. *Role Plays*

Role plays are excellent vehicles for the reinforcement of knowledge gained in the abovementioned analyses. There are at least three role play formats that can be effectively used: scripted, partially-scripted, and unscripted. In the scripted role play, pairs of students using a verbatim transcript of one of the previously presented dialogs try to duplicate, as nearly as possible, the taped performance of the native speakers. In a partially-scripted role play, students also work from a transcript, but are encouraged to adopt different attitudes, e.g., invite someone grudgingly, refuse an invitation even if the inviter is extremely persistent. To do this the students need to alter the dialog substantially and improvise when necessary. In an unscripted role play, the students are told which function to execute and which register to use. It is their responsibility to provide the language and situational context. Though students can create a dialog for this type of role play in class, the results tend to be better if they are given this type of assignment as homework.

3. *Viewing and Discussing Videotaped Student Dialogs*

Any of the aforementioned student role plays can be videotaped and played back immediately or at a later time. At the time of playback, they can be discussed, commented on, and constructively criticized by the class with guidance provided by the teacher.

4. *Scrambled Dialogs*

In this type of exercise the students are given the lines of a dialog, functionally similar to the original videotaped segment, but not in their correct order. The students' task is to correctly reorder these lines into a piece of coherent discourse through the use of overt and covert discourse features. This type of exercise can be done in or out of class by individual students, pairs, or small groups. It can also be done by the entire class in strip-story fashion, that is, each of the lines of the dialog is put on a separate index card or slip of paper; the entire class then works as a group to find the correct order.

5. *Register Change Exercise*

In this type of exercise the students are instructed to change the register of a dialog they have previously analyzed, that is, change it from informal to formal or vice-versa. This, of course, requires changing the sociocultural and situational context as well as the language. This type of

exercise works equally well when done in or out of class by individuals, pairs or small groups.

6. *Written Analysis Exercise*

This type of exercise consists of a written transcript of an alternative dialog which the students have not previously seen followed by written questions that ask about specific features of the dialog. This type of exercise can be done with or without prior exposure to the VT segment from which the transcript was made, and thus, can work equally well as an in-class or out-of-class assignment. If done individually by students, this exercise can perform an evaluative function.

## SUMMARY COMMENTS

There are three important points regarding these materials and procedures that should be noted by the reader. First, the foregoing suggestions are in no way hypothetical. They are based on the results of actual classroom use of this type of VT material in ESL programs at the UIUC and at Harvard University. Second, though the materials were designed with high-intermediate to advanced students in mind, it has been found that this type of VT material can be successfully adapted for students at all proficiency levels by adjusting the scope and depth of the analysis and the length, complexity, and focus of the followup exercises. Third, though the stated purpose of the materials is to familiarize students with as many aspects of interpersonal oral communication as possible so that they can function meaningfully in this context, this does not imply that the material could not be used as a contextualized point of departure for the further exploration of a particular feature, for example, contractions, or class of features, for example, grammar.

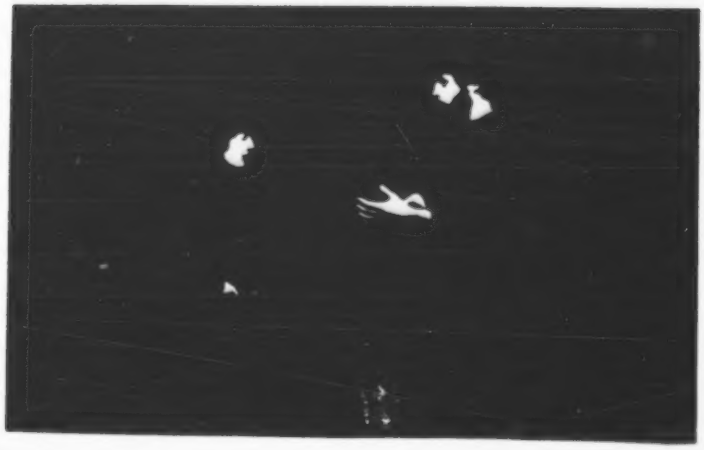
Thus, the examples that have been presented here illustrate but one possible means by which a particular type of VT material can be exploited by a teacher for use in the L2 classroom. This discussion has not been intended as a "how to" guide for the use of VT materials, nor has it sought to promote any particular approach to the use of video in L2 teaching. Its main purpose has been to show that it is possible for an L2 classroom teacher to conceive and produce viable and effective VT materials as well as put them to good use in the classroom. It is hoped that discussions of this type will encourage L2 teachers to further explore the possibilities of this medium.

Line (2) B: Hi, Jean. How are you?

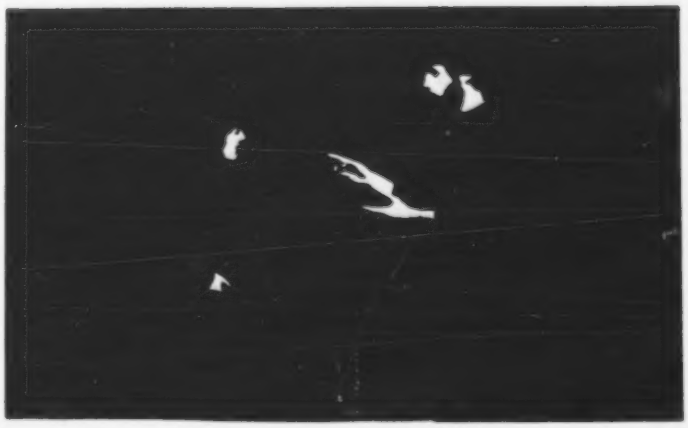
Line (8) B: Oh, a costume. Boy.

Line (20) B: Any charge?

Line (21) J: No, absolutely not.



Line (28) B: 905 South Race.



Line (30) B: That's close...

Line (34) B: Okay. That's on Saturday, the 30th?

Line (42) B: Okay. Bye-bye.